

# THE CATALYST

## SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION MONTHLY ACTIVITIES UPDATE

**THIS MONTH'S MEETING:** Thursday 10/14/06 at 7 pm at Jennings Environmental Education Center, pizza and pop provided. 8/13/06 Meeting Attendance: C. Cooper, K. Durrett, S. Garrison, D. Johnson, V. Kefeli, W. Taylor, K. Williams

### A Fun-Filled 5th Annual Ohio River Watershed Celebration!!!

It was "bon voyage" for over 700 excited participants on September 21, as folks from a variety of backgrounds took part in the 5th Annual Ohio River Watershed Celebration (ORWC). And what a voyage it was! With a beautiful blue sky, lots of sunshine, and a temperature in the 60's, the setting for this year's Celebration couldn't have been any better! Individuals and organizations including watershed groups, local, state, and federal agencies, environmental professionals, private business and industry, educators, students (over 250 homeschoolers!!), interested citizens, and others, came to explore Pittsburgh's Allegheny River and learn more about the importance of a healthy and productive watershed.

The day's festivities began late morning, with participants engaging in pre-cruise activities at Station Square's Gateway Clipper dock area and onboard its largest vessel, the *Majestic*. Activities included fun learning about mammals with the PA Game Commission, macroinvertebrates (stream bugs) with the US EPA, birds with the National Aviary, kayaks with Venture Outdoors, a watershed game with Audubon Beechwood Farms, and "Build a Caterpillar" with Natural Biodiversity. 58 educational displays of watershed groups and agencies/companies focusing on the environment were available for attendees to examine and learn from. 5 guest speakers addressed the crowd at the main deck: Stephanie Timmermeyer, Secretary, WV DEP; Colonel Stephen L. Hill, District Eng., US Army Corps of Engineers (Pittsburgh); Mike Sherman, Deputy Secretary Field Ops., PA DEP; and Scott Roberts, Deputy Secretary, PA DEP.

In a special surprise ceremony to recognize the work done above and beyond the call of duty in the area of watershed restoration and protection, awards were presented in the morning at the dock to: **West Homestead Borough, Allegheny County**—Municipal Government Environmental Award; **Jane Nugent** (WPTT-1360 AM talk show host) —Individual Environmental Award for her "Garden Party" radio show; and **Consol Energy**—"Environmental Award – Company" for its partnership in local and regional support of environmental education efforts.



Jane Nugent



CONSOL Energy



West Homestead Borough

Celebration attendees enjoyed a 3-hour sailing adventure up the Allegheny River through the Highland Park Lock & Dam. Participants were treated to an interesting narration of unique river sites, landmarks, cultural, and environmental features by narrators Dave Planck and Maggie Hall of the PA DEP. Musical entertainment onboard the *Majestic* was provided by the talented Mike Gallagher. Three mini presentations highlighted the trip upriver including:

- Mr. Edwin Pinero, Federal Environmental Executive of the Federal Environmental Executive Office at the White House presented his and President George W. Bush's support for "cooperative conservation" as exhibited by the sponsors of the ORWC who represent business, industry and watershed groups. Mr. Pinero read a letter of appreciation to Stream Restoration Inc. and all partners of the ORWC for their commitment and dedication to our watersheds signed by President George W. Bush.
- Mr. George Watzlaf, Dept. Of Energy and National Energy Technology Laboratory, discussed a new technology for recovering geothermal energy from AMD mine pools.
- Dr. Sue Thompson, Director of the PA Fish and Boat Commission Research Facility, talked about aquatic studies on our rivers.

For the first time, attendees selected the winners for 4 watershed awards, casting votes after examining the poster displays and talking with representatives about the work done in their respective watersheds. The 4 first place winners received \$500, while the 4 second place winners got \$250. The winning organizations in each of the 4 categories were: Shade Creek Watershed Association (1st place) and Independence Marsh Foundation (2nd place) in the "Overall" category; Neville Naturalist (1st place) and Natural Biodiversity (2nd place) for "Outreach"; Toby Creek Watershed Association (1st place) and Montour Run Watershed Association (2nd place) for "Innovative"; and Raccoon Creek Watershed Association (1st place) and Wells Creek Watershed Association (2nd place) for Partnership. (See Photo of the Month.)

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Dave Hess, former PA DEP Secretary, along with representatives from the Watershed Award Winners

### **Flying High - SRWC Participant Develops New Way to See and Make Topographic Maps with Old Tools**

Charlie Cooper has been gradually perfecting the use of large helium balloons to help in watershed and other work. The first use of a large (4' diameter) balloon was simply to float one marked 'SRWC' at the Boyers Sportsmen's Club two years ago during the Slippery Rock Watershed Festival. He flew it at the FAA allowable height of < 200'. He repeated that at the Harrisville Community Days celebration again this year.

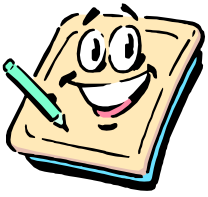
But it had occurred to him that remote controlled cameras could be lifted to take aerial photographs, as well as continuous video using inexpensive cameras and servos to aim the camera(s). Total cost - a little over \$200. Now Cooper believes the system can be used to create complete topographic maps.

Cooper anticipates that the new-old system will use inexpensive stadia or EDM equipment, marking each 'shot' in the field with a number. Pre-construction tethered balloon photography would be taken, with selected ground points made visible on the photography. A significant advantage of this new-old system is that the site is 'pin-cushioned' with points of known location, so staking proposed ponds or other design improvements is a 'snap'. When construction is complete, as-built balloon photography can again be taken, augmented with some ground elevations, to produce the plan plus a detailed aerial photograph.

One problem Cooper feared has been overcome, he believes. Latex or similar material balloons can 'pop' or blow out when punctured. A small mylar helium balloon was brought to the August SRWC meeting to demonstrate its properties. Cooper punctured the mylar balloon with an awl. It not only didn't pop, it took 2-1/2 hours to deflate and eventually sink. Toy blimps and even large 18'+ long remote-controlled mylar blimps are available, but rather 'out of range' of Cooper's budget - he intends to buy the mylar and make them himself. Up, up and away!

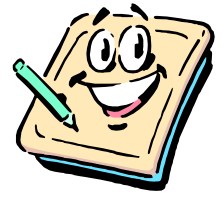


Isaac Busler tests the remote control that Charlie Cooper has developed to use with the large helium balloons.



# The KIDS Catalyst

SLIPPERY ROCK WATERSHED COALITION FUN ACTIVITY



## Pennsylvania Trees Word Search!

Pennsylvania means "Penn's woods" in Latin, and this is the time of year when people admire the beautiful colors of the leaves on the trees as autumn begins. Pennsylvania's forests are important sources of lumber, paper, nuts and chemicals. Trees are also important because they help in removing pollution from the air we breathe and the water we drink. Trees provide homes and food for wildlife, and beautify our homes with comforting shade in summer and shelter from winter winds. In PA there are 108 species of native trees and many others that were introduced from Europe and Asia. Below is a list of 16 of the more common trees in PA. Try to find them all in the word search! Circle each tree name you can find, and if you mail us your completed paper we will send you a free gift certificate!

RedBud	Hickory	Hemlock	Chestnut
Elm	Birch	Dogwood	Spruce
Aspen	Beech	Maple	Cedar
Cherry	Oak	Ash	Pine

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Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition c/o Stream Restoration Incorporated  
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## Westminster Students To Present Findings at November SRWC Meeting



Chemistry and biochemistry students from **Westminster College's** Advanced Laboratory class will be presenting their findings at the Slippery Rock Watershed Coalition's monthly meeting on November 9, 2006 at 7 PM. The students under the supervision of their professor **Dr. Helen Boylan** have recently conducted field testing and collected water samples for laboratory analysis at the De Sale Phase I, De Sale Phase II, and Erico Bridge passive treatment systems.

**Will Taylor** from **Jennings Environmental Education Center** and **Cliff Denholm** from **Stream Restoration Incorporated** accompanied the students to teach them about proper water sampling techniques and demonstrate the use of field equipment. In addition, they provided a short tour and overview of the passive treatment systems. Prior to taking the students out in the field Will and Cliff went to Westminster College to give a presentation on coal mining, abandoned mine drainage, water chemistry, passive treatment, and water sampling.

After collecting the water samples, the students used laboratory instruments to conduct chemical analyses and performed associated calculations prior to writing a report. While the students have had many laboratory experiences, for most, this was their first field experience. The students seemed to enjoy being outside for a change and seemed genuinely interested in the restoration effort. The students will be discussing their project and presenting their data to the Coalition at the November meeting. Please come out to the meeting and support the students' hard work. As usual pizza and pop will be provided.

